



***ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION***

***APRIL 29, 2004
7:00 P.M.***

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order.**
- 2. Roll Call.**
- 3. Invocation. Mayor Ralph K. Smith.**
- 4. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America will be led by Mayor Smith.**
- 5. Statement of Purpose. Mayor Smith.**
- 6. Public Hearings:**
 - a. Recommended 2004-05 HUD funding budget.**
 - b. Recommended fiscal year 2004-05 City of Roanoke Budget.**



***ROANOKE CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION***

APRIL 29, 2004

***IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING ADJOURNMENT
OF THE 7:00 P.M. SESSION OF COUNCIL***

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order.**
- 2. Roll Call.**
- 3. Statement of Purpose. Mayor Smith.**
- 4. Public hearing on real property tax rate.**
- 5. Adjournment.**

The Roanoke Times
Roanoke, Virginia
Affidavit of Publication

The Roanoke Times

CITY OF RKE OFF. OF BUDG
ATTN: SHERMAN STOVALL
215 CHURCH AVE RM. 364
ROANOKE VA 24011

REFERENCE: 10153811
02346165 prop tax increase

State of Virginia
City of Roanoke

I, (the undersigned) an authorized representative
of the Times-World Corporation, which corporation
is publisher of the Roanoke Times, a daily
newspaper published in Roanoke, in the State of
Virginia, do certify that the annexed notice was
published in said newspapers on the following
dates:

City/County of Roanoke, Commonwealth/State of
Virginia. Sworn and subscribed before me this
29th day of April 2004. Witness my hand and
official seal.

Budgette N. Jones - Notary Public
My commission expires April 30, 2007.

PUBLISHED ON: 04/20

TOTAL COST: 629.32
FILED ON: 04/29/04

Authorized
Signature: Tim A McEnheaney Billing Services Representative

NOTICE OF PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Pursuant to Section 58.1-3321, Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, notice is hereby given that the City of Roanoke proposes to increase property tax levies.

1. **Assessment Increase:** The total assessed value of real property, excluding additional assessments due to new construction or improvements to property, exceeds last year's total assessed value of real property by 5.98 percent.

2. **Lowered Rate Necessary to Offset Increased Assessment:** The tax rate which would levy the same amount of real estate tax as last year, when multiplied by the new total assessed value of real estate with the exclusions mentioned above, would be \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value. This rate will be known as the "lowered tax rate."

3. **Effective Rate Increase:** The City of Roanoke proposes to adopt a tax rate of \$1.21 per \$100 of assessed value. The difference between the lowered tax rate and the proposed tax rate would be \$.07 per \$100, or 5.98 percent. This difference will be known as the "effective tax rate increase." Individual property taxes may, however, increase at a percentage greater than or less than the above percentage.

4. **Proposed Total Budget Increase:** Based on the proposed real property tax rate and changes in other revenues, the total budget of the City of Roanoke will exceed last year's by 3.47 percent.

A public hearing on the "effective tax rate increase" will be held on Thursday, April 29, 2004, at 7:10 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, in City Council Chambers, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, SW, Roanoke, Virginia. All persons desiring to be heard shall be accorded an opportunity to present oral testimony within such reasonable time limits as shall be determined by City Council.

If you are a person with a disability who needs accommodations for this public hearing, please contact the City Clerk's Office, 853-2541, by 10:00 a.m., Monday, April 26, 2004.

Given under my hand this 20th day of April, 2004.

Mary F. Parker, City Clerk

The Roanoke Times
Roanoke, Virginia
Affidavit of Publication

The Roanoke Times

CITY OF RKE OFF. OF BUDG
ATTN: SHERMAN STOVALL
215 CHURCH AVE RM. 364
ROANOKE VA 24011

REFERENCE: 10153811
02346159 Recomend Budget

State of Virginia
City of Roanoke

I, (the undersigned) an authorized representative
of the Times-World Corporation, which corporation
is publisher of the Roanoke Times, a daily
newspaper published in Roanoke, in the State of
Virginia, do certify that the annexed notice was
published in said newspapers on the following
dates:

City/County of Roanoke, Commonwealth/State of
Virginia. Sworn and subscribed before me this
29th day of April 2004. Witness my hand and
official seal.

Budgett N. Jones Notary Public
My commission expires April 30, 2007.

PUBLISHED ON: 04/20

TOTAL COST: 472.00
FILED ON: 04/29/04

Authorized
Signature: Tim A McEntire, Billing Services Representative

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC
HEARING
CITY OF ROANOKE
RECOMMENDED
2004-05 BUDGET**

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2506, Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, notice is hereby given that on Thursday, April 29, 2004 at 7:05 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, Roanoke City Council will hold a special meeting in City Council Chambers, Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, SW, Roanoke, Virginia, for the purpose of holding a public hearing on the recommended 2004-05 City Budget. All persons shall be afforded an opportunity to speak and state their views concerning all aspects of the budget within such reasonable time limits as shall be established by City Council. Written comments of interested citizens will be received by the City Clerk at any time prior to the hearing.

If you are a person with a disability who needs accommodations for this public hearing, please contact the City Clerk's Office, 853-2541, by 10:00 a.m., Monday, April 26, 2004.

Complete copies of the recommended budget will be available for public inspection at the City Clerk's Office, Room 456, and the City Manager's Office, Room 364, located at the Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, SW, and the Main Public Library located at 706 S. Jefferson Street, Roanoke.

The recommended budget is summarized as follows:

REVENUE ESTIMATES:

General Fund:

General Property Taxes	\$87,691,000
Other Local Taxes	62,431,000
Permits, Fees & Licenses	1,112,000
Fines and Forfeitures	1,321,000
Revenue from Use/Money & Property	735,000
Intergovernmental Revenue-State/Federal	47,321,000
Charges for Current Services	10,986,000
Miscellaneous Revenue	315,000
TOTAL - GENERAL FUND	\$211,912,000

Proprietary Funds:

• Enterprise Funds:	
Civic Facilities Fund	\$5,172,035
Parking Fund	\$2,780,307
Market Building Fund	\$307,384
• Internal Service Funds:	
Fleet Management Fund	\$5,776,883
Risk Management Fund	\$13,001,617
Technology Fund	\$5,613,293

School Fund:

School Fund	\$116,346,378
-------------	---------------

RECOMMENDED EXPENDITURES:

General Fund:

Community Development	\$3,008,777
General Government	11,302,536
Health and Welfare	30,082,158
Judicial Administration	6,655,812
Non-Departmental	77,196,747
Parks, Recreation & Cultural	10,927,664
Public Safety	50,708,491
Public Works	22,029,815
TOTAL - GENERAL FUND	\$211,912,000

Proprietary Funds:

• Enterprise Funds:	
Civic Facilities Fund	\$5,172,035
Parking Fund	\$2,780,307
Market Building Fund	\$307,384
• Internal Service Funds:	
Fleet Management Fund	\$5,776,883
Risk Management Fund	\$13,725,617
Technology Fund	\$5,613,293

School Fund:

School Fund	\$116,346,378
-------------	---------------

Given under my hand this 20th day of April, 2004.

Mary F. Parker, City Clerk

The Roanoke Times
Roanoke, Virginia
Affidavit of Publication

The Roanoke Times

CITY OF RKE OFF. OF BUDG
ATTN: SHERMAN STOVALL
215 CHURCH AVE RM. 364
ROANOKE VA 24011

REFERENCE: 10153811
02346168 Local tax levi

State of Virginia
City of Roanoke

I, (the undersigned) an authorized representative of the Times-World Corporation, which corporation is publisher of the Roanoke Times, a daily newspaper published in Roanoke, in the State of Virginia, do certify that the annexed notice was published in said newspapers on the following dates:

City/County of Roanoke, Commonwealth/State of Virginia. Sworn and subscribed before me this 29th day of April 2004. Witness my hand and official seal.

Budgett M. Jones Notary Public
My commission expires April 30, 2007.

PUBLISHED ON: 04/20

TOTAL COST: 489.47
FILED ON: 04/29/04

Authorized Signature: John A McFarlane, Billing Services Representative

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF ROANOKE
RECOMMENDED 2004-2005 HUD FUNDING BUDGET**

Pursuant to 24 CFR 91.105, notice is hereby given that on Thursday, April 29, 2004, at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, Roanoke City Council will meet in the City Council Chambers, fourth floor of the Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, SW, Roanoke, Virginia, for the purpose of holding a public hearing on the City's proposed 2004-2005 HUD Funding Budget. All persons shall be afforded an opportunity to speak and state their views concerning all aspects of the budget within such reasonable time limits as shall be established by City Council. Written comments of interested persons will be received by the City Clerk at any time prior to the hearing.

Complete copies of the Draft Annual Update to the Consolidated Plan, which includes the recommended 2004-2005 budget, were made available for public inspection beginning Thursday, April 8, 2004, at the City Clerk's Office, Room 456, Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue; the Department of Management and Budget, Room 354, Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue; all City Library locations, including the Law Library; and the main office of the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 2624 Salem Turnpike, N.W. Comments will be accepted in writing through Friday, May 7, 2004 at the Department of Management and Budget, Room 354 Municipal Building, 215 Church Avenue, SW, Roanoke, VA 24011.

The recommended HUD funding budget is as follows:

REVENUE ESTIMATES:

CDBG 2004-05 Entitlement Grant	\$2,207,000
CDBG 2004-05 Program Income	490,051
CDBG Prior Year Carry-over and Excess Program Income	111,388
HOME 2004-05 Entitlement Grant	808,299
HOME 2004-05 Program Income	25,000
HOME Prior Year Carry-over and Excess Program Income	41,830
ESG 2004-05 Entitlement Grant	80,731
TOTAL HUD REVENUE	\$3,764,299

RECOMMENDED EXPENDITURES:

Housing Development	\$2,495,492
Neighborhood, Community and Economic Development	914,299
Human Services (including Homeless assistance)	344,508
Planning and Other Activities	10,000
TOTAL RECOMMENDED EXPENDITURES	\$3,764,299

Citizens who desire to speak at the meeting should contact the City Clerk's office at 853-2541. Individuals with a disability needing an accommodation should contact the City Clerk's office by April 26, 2004. For further information about the meeting or to comment on or inquire about the plan, contact the Department of Management and Budget at 853-6800.

Given under my hand this 20th day of April 2004.

Mary F. Parker, City Clerk.



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building
215 Church Avenue, SW, Room 364
Roanoke, Virginia 24011
540.853.2333
www.roanokegov.com

April 28, 2004

Ms. Katheryn R. Hale
West End Center for Youth
1223 Patterson Avenue, SW
Roanoke, VA 24016

Subject: Request for Reconsideration
West End Center Application
for 2004-2005 CDBG Funds


Dear Ms. ~~Hale~~:

Thank you for meeting with me and for your letter of April 23, 2004, regarding the current recommendation to not provide CDBG funding to the Center for 2004-2005. You have requested that the City reconsider this recommendation. After reviewing this matter and obtaining staff input, including their visit with you and Ms. Parrish yesterday, I regret that I cannot honor your request.

As you know, a key factor in the present recommendation involves the City Council "HUD Funds Policy." Among its provisions, the policy states that any ongoing, noncapital program or project is availed at most three years eligibility to receive CDBG funds, including progressive reductions over this period of eligibility. In administering this provision, the City must first decide whether an application constitutes a new program or is a continuation of a currently funded program determined to be ongoing and noncapital in nature. The Center's application was, in your view, a new program and not previously funded. However, the review committee and supporting City staff determined that the application represented a continuation of currently funded, ongoing activities of the Center, subject to the three-year, decreasing funding provision.

This determination reflects our understanding of the Center's services. As you have indicated in the application, the review committee interview and in the most recent discussions with City staff, the Center essentially integrates all activities into a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of each child through a variation in the mix of services provided. The activities that happen during the school year happen during the summer as well, with an increase or decrease in emphasis. Moreover, the Center's billing approach under its

Ms. Katheryn R. Hale
April 28, 2004
Page 2

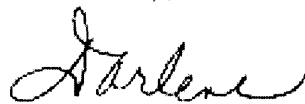
current contract begins with a cost per child, as opposed to definable "program" costs. This leaves no practical way to distinguish "programs" and reinforces that the application was appropriately subject to the three-year policy.

Once it is determined that the Center's application represents a continuation of a currently-funded, ongoing, noncapital program, subject to the three-year policy, the limit for which funding may be applied is identified. In the case of the Center, the 2004-2005 period represents the third year of eligibility, which is limited to 33% of the initial year funding. The initial year was 2002-2003 and the funding was \$27,000, so that the third-year limit for 2004-2005 would have been \$9,000.

While the foregoing defines the limits for which funding could be applied, the recommendation also rests on the ranking of applications. The Center ranked 14th out of 16 human services applicants. Neither the Center nor any applicant placing lower received funding.

While I regret that I cannot support your request, I recognize the importance of the Center's services to its neighborhood and the entire community. Therefore, I am prepared to support offering the Center the \$9,000 in third-year funding for which it would have been eligible. Please let me know whether wish to pursue this opportunity.

Sincerely,



Darlene L. Burcham
City Manager

c: The Honorable Mayor and Members of Council
Mary F. Parker, City Clerk
William M. Hackworth, City Attorney
Jesse A Hall, Director of Finance
George C. Snead, Assistant City Manager for Operations
Rolanda B. Russell, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Jane R. Conlin, Director of Human/Social Services
Sherman M. Stovall, Acting Director of Management and Budget
Frank E. Baratta, Budget Team Leader



Office of the City Manager
Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building
215 Church Avenue, S.W., Room 364
Roanoke, Virginia 24011
540-853-2333 fax: 540-853-1138

April 27, 2004

Mr. Theodore J. Edlich, III
Total Action Against Poverty
P.O. Box 2868
Roanoke, VA 24001-2868

**Subject: Request for Reconsideration
Regarding "Harrison School
Commons" Application**

Dear Mr. Edlich:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me regarding the above-referenced application. Improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods is of paramount importance to City Council, to me and to all who care about the future of our community. I understand your concern that this CDBG application is currently not recommended for funding, and appreciate your request that we reconsider this decision.

I regret that I cannot support a change in this recommendation. While there is no doubt that there are many needs in the Harrison neighborhood, the level of financial commitment you envision is not within our present capability. It would represent another major targeted investment, at a time when we are still working on the *Southeast . . . by Design* project and beginning activities in the Gainsboro and Gilmer neighborhoods. Moreover, the Harrison neighborhood was not among the first six areas identified by the Neighborhood Selection Task Force and adopted by Council for concentrated assistance. Thus, granting your request would effectively redirect the course set by Council and could extend the timing for reaching the other identified areas.

The forgoing is the key element in responding to your request; however, you should know that there are other considerations. Among these, questions with the cost data in the original Harrison proposal reviewed for the HUD funding process, which differs somewhat from the concepts now being discussed, were never quite resolved. In addition, that proposal assumed City infrastructure investments that had not been discussed with the appropriate City departments

Mr. Theodore J. Edlich, III
April 27, 2004
Page 2

to determine whether they would have been feasible when required. Further, there is some question as to the timing and level of involvement of residents of the neighborhood in the project design and goals. I believe I speak for Council in strongly supporting the concept of neighborhood participation preceding the assembling of predevelopment financing. I believe more could be done in this regard on the Harrison project.

Again, I regret that I cannot support a change to the current recommendation. All neighborhoods are important and it is difficult to acknowledge the reality of limited resources. I would encourage you, Ms. Shende, the neighborhood organization and residents to continue to pursue HUD assistance in the next funding cycle. Even for areas not among the six neighborhoods identified by Council, opportunities will remain for projects of reasonable scale, especially where predevelopment costs are shared with other private and public sources.

Sincerely,



Darlene L. Burcham
City Manager

- c: The Honorable Mayor and Members of Council
Mary F. Parker, City Clerk
William M. Hackworth, City Attorney
Jesse A Hall, Director of Finance
George C. Snead, Assistant City Manager for Operations
Rolanda B. Russell, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Freed G. Etienne, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Services
Sherman M. Stovall, Acting Director of Management and Budget
Dianne W. Morris, Housing Development Administrator
Frank E. Baratta, Budget Team Leader
Susheela Shende, Development Initiatives, Inc.

PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF ROANOKE
RECOMMENDED 2004-2005 HUD FUNDING BUDGET
April 29, 2004

RE: Reconsideration of 2004-2005 Fair Housing Initiatives Project

The Fair Housing Board seeks funding to track data on complaints in order to help target the audience for its educational programs on fair housing rights. Presently there is no mechanism in place to collect this information for the city.

In the past the city has not kept records of the complaints it has forwarded to the Virginia Fair Housing Office. The Fair Housing Board has received anecdotal information from NAACP, Blue Ridge Independent Living Center, and Tenant's Building Bridges about fair housing complaints that they have forwarded to the State Office or HUD. Legal Aid handles fair housing complaints, but doesn't keep data by issue. The Board became aware of inadvertent discrimination by the City's Zoning Board, during a workshop the Board sponsored for the Zoning Board. The Zoning Board Administrator presented six cases on which the Board had made determinations. Michael Allen, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, our consultant, identified discriminatory practices in two of the six cases. These are a few sources of discrimination that have come to the Board's attention. Please know that there are many more that go unreported.

The FHB proposes to contract out to track data using information from the natural constituencies in order to focus our educational programs. Contracting out for this service was not the Board's first choice. When the city said it could not provide additional staff time for fair housing, the Board focused on CDBG funding. The city's refusal of additional staff time and the City Manager's inability to support outsourcing this task must mean the city doesn't want it to happen.

The Impediments Study published in 2001, which the City Manager referred to in her letter to me, lists 42 impediments to fair housing in the city. 21 of the 42 suggest remedies supporting education about fair housing rights and support fair housing enforcement. Six of the impediments speak directly to the Fair Housing Board. Impedient 39 states that the Board should review the needs of Roanoke's residents for effective fair housing services and evaluate its own role and procedures in meeting those needs. If the city won't support our finding out the nature of the complaints how can the Board fulfill its responsibilities? The need to do more is clearly articulated in the Impediments Study.

The Board asks your forbearance on the issue of not expending all our funds this year. First, let me correct the figures quoted in the letter. Our workshop earlier this month and the publication of our Fair Housing brochure had not been counted. We stand at about \$6,000. There are extenuating circumstances which relate to two changes in staff, loss of records from one staff person to another, and generally having to start from scratch with each new person. In addition, much of the Board's meeting time was consumed in negotiations with the City administration and Council about revisions to the city's fair housing ordinance. Once Council passed the ordinance in March, the Board was able to publish its Fair Housing Booklet and focus on the April workshop. We plan to use the remainder of our 2003-2004 allocation for education, such as a workshop on predatory lending.

The Board's request for 2004-2005 has been reduced to \$11,700, which includes

.3 FTE Secretarial position	\$7350
benefits	2350
materials, supplies, postage, training	2000

Habitat for Humanity in the Roanoke Valley is an ecumenical housing ministry working with donors, volunteers and homeowners to create decent, affordable housing for those in need and to make shelter a matter of conscience with people everywhere, especially in the Roanoke Valley.

Since 1986 Habitat for Humanity in the Roanoke Valley has been building homes in partnership with low and very low income families providing them with the opportunity that is the dream of every family in America, that of homeownership. To accomplish this dream, Habitat sells homes to selected families with no profit or interest added. Families are selected according to criteria that does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed or ethnic background. Habitat reaches out to deserving families within 25% to 50% of the median income. Habitat requires homeowners to contribute sweat equity in the building of their home as well as a down payment. Support programs are also provided to all families on such areas as budgeting, balancing a check book, wills and powers of attorney, home maintenance and other issues essential to property ownership.

No government funds are used in Habitat home construction. Habitat does however receive some support for land purchase and infrastructure construction through grant applications from Habitat International in their Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity (SHOP) and the City of Roanoke Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) programs

Habitat has constructed 124 homes since 1986 all on land that was vacant and generating few tax dollars for the City. Each of these Habitat homes now generate approximately \$850 per year in property taxes or approximately \$105,400 per year.

According to the City's 2000-2005 Consolidated Plan there is a very great need in the City of Roanoke for affordable homes for low and very low-income families. Habitat addresses the City's Consolidated Plan priorities and objectives:

1. In Housing, Priority A, Objective 1, New Homeownership.
2. In Special Needs Housing and Services, Priority E, Objective 3 and Objective 9, Housing and Supportive Services for Those with Special Needs,.
3. In Neighborhood Development, Priority H, Objective 3, Increasing Infrastructure Improvements in Neighborhoods.

Habitat has also embraced the City's Neighborhood Design District Standards and changed all the Habitat house designs to incorporate most of the standards including extra bathrooms and air conditioning.

Habitat has a very good working relationship with the City of Roanoke and desires to continue that relationship in the future. Habitat has also received significant funding support over the years to support our mission while addressing in each case the City's Consolidated Plan Priorities and Objectives as previously mentioned.

Some examples of this cooperative effort:

June 1994 to October 1995. Habitat constructed 15 homes on Kellogg Avenue NW. Area churches businesses and organizations provided funding. Additional funding was obtained from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta and from the City of Roanoke Vacant Lot Homesteading Program.

September 1995. Habitat constructed 5 homes on Cleveland Avenue SW. Area churches businesses and organizations provided funding. Additional funds came from the City of Roanoke Vacant Lot Homesteading Program. This project was significant in that Habitat had to petition the City of Roanoke to have the property rezoned. In addition Habitat incorporated specific design elements into the construction of the homes. Since the Cleveland Avenue lots adjoin a historical district the City Planning Department suggested some elements that would aid Habitat in building homes that would conform to the existing structures in the neighborhood.

August 1995-March 2000. Habitat constructed 22 homes in the Perry Park area on Norfolk Avenue, Jackson Street, 11th and 12th streets. Area churches businesses and organizations provided funding. A parcel of land was donated by Norfolk Southern Railroad. Funding for infrastructure was obtained from HUD through their SHOP Program and from the City of Roanoke CDBG grants program.

August 2000-July 2001. Habitat acquired property for the construction of 9 homes, 7 on Salem Turnpike and 36th Street and 2 on 10th Street. Funding for infrastructure was obtained from the City of Roanoke HOME finds and from HUD through the SHOP 2000 program. 3 homes were completed in 2001 and 6 in 2002.

For this past support Habitat, it homeowners, sponsors and volunteers are most grateful.

However over the past year there has been a subtle change in philosophy relative to the City's support provided to Habitat. Last year Habitat submitted a FY 2003-2004 Community Development Block Grant request for funding to construct infrastructure to support the building of 12 Habitat homes on a parcel of land owned by Habitat. This request was not approved because the City, in so many words, did not want that many homes for low income families to be built in one area.

Therefore for this year's FY 2004-2005 CDBG program Habitat submitted a request to purchase 7 individual infill lots within the City of Roanoke to steer away from the previous year's aversion to building more than one Habitat home in an area. This years request has also been denied because the City, again in so many words, now feels that too many homes for low income families are being built in the City limits and Habitat needs to look to the other communities in the area to build homes for low income families.

Habitat has been told that another reason for this change in philosophy is that the assessed value of Habitat homes does not generate the necessary property tax revenue to offset the cost of the normal services a family occupying that home would require.

This philosophical change in support to Habitat is distressing when compared with the stated needs within the City's Consolidated Plan which indicates that affordability is a serious problem for low-income families. It is hoped that there will be a change to this philosophy in the near future so that Habitat can continue its housing ministry while at the same time address the objectives and priorities of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

2265 Sewell Lane
Roanoke, Virginia 24015

April 19, 2004

Darleen Burcham
Office of the City Manager
Noel C. Taylor Municipal Building
215 Church Avenue, SW, Room 364
Roanoke, Virginia 24011

Dear Ms. Burcham:

The Fair Housing Board and I are very concerned that we will not receive any new CDBG funds for next fiscal year. By receipt of the new funds, we had hoped to contract with an outside entity to put a tracking mechanism in place amongst the agencies within the city to compile data on fair housing complaints. We are well aware of the fact that community agencies and groups have received complaints but no data has ever been compiled. We also hoped to continue our educational component on an ongoing basis.

On April 9, 2004 I met with Frank Baratta to discuss my concerns. He, in turn, forwarded these to Rolanda Russell. As of today, I have not heard a response.

Since 1999, when Thomas Day, HUD representative, threatened to withhold all CDBG funds, the city has recognized that in order to maintain compliance it must do more to affirmatively further fair housing. In a letter to City Council on February 8, 1999, the City Manager stated that "...the city of Roanoke is committed to ensuring that all citizens are given equal opportunity in buying or renting in any section of the city." Further he stated "My staff will continue to lend assistance ... and create new opportunities for public and private partnerships to ensure that fair housing practices occur throughout the city." The Fair Housing Board's 1999 application for CDBG funding noted that "To continue to meet HUD's regulations, additional steps must be taken. An Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Study must be completed, and additional initiatives undertaken." The city's refusal to allocate additional personnel time to our task and the failure now to fund our CDBG request reflects negatively on the city's commitment to affirmatively furthering fair housing.

An April 2002 HUD report, entitled How Much Do We Know? Public Awareness of the Nation's Fair Housing Laws, states, "Clearly, something needs to be done to raise the level of public knowledge about the complaint and enforcement process, and to encourage greater trust in the efficacy of that system. If awareness is to lead to a reduction in discrimination, it will be manifested partly through individuals acting to affirm their rights. Thus, alongside objective assessment and tracking of the frequency of discriminatory actions by landlords, home sellers, real estate agents, mortgage lenders, or others, it would be helpful to learn if the public perceives more or less discrimination in the housing market over time."

Page 2

The Board requests that you reconsider your recommendation and allow the Fair Housing Board to proceed with this much-needed next step in ensuring fair housing for the citizens of the city of Roanoke.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nancy F. Canova
Chairman
Fair Housing Board

Cc: Dianne Morris, Board Secretary
Housing and Neighborhood Services



Robert CRAIG
<rcraig06@cox.net>
04/29/2004 10:42 AM

To Clerk@ci.roanoke.va.us
cc
bcc
Subject RESOLUTION DEALING WITH PROPERTY TAXES

THE CITY COUNCIL IS HOLDING A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE "EFFECTIVE TAX RATE INCREASE" THIS EVEING AT 7.10 P.M, ETC AND SO FORTH.

At that time the following Resolution for Dealing with Property Taxes will be formerly introduced for consideration. I am providing you with this advance copy in order that you may add it to the agenda and provide copies to members of the City Council and the City Attorney and others as necessary.

Accordingly, please schedule me to speak at this evening's meeting for a period of no less than seven minutes.

Sincerely
Robert R. Craig

=====
=====

NOTICE OF ACTIONS PERTAINING TO REAL PROPERTY TAX RATES

Pursuant to Section 58. 1-3321, Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, notice is hereby given that the City of Roanoke will not increase property tax levies until:

1. The City Tax Assessor certifies that the real property assessments of all tax parcels located within the boundaries of the City of Roanoke, accurately reflect, to the 90 percent confidence level, the true market value of no less than 95 percent of all tax parcels listed on the roles of the city as of 1 May 2004.
2. The accuracy of the market valuations will be validated by an independent, certified and bonded entity qualified to conduct such studies, contracted for by the City. The independent validation will be based on a random sample of such size as to insure the 90 percent confidence level.
3. Based on the reassessed property values the amount of revenue generated at the current assessment rate will be computed. The computed amount will be used to assess (potential) revenue generated vs budgeted requirements using the 2003-2004 city budget as the base.

At that time and only at that time, will the City Council consider a change to the current property tax rate.

FURTHERMORE

Prior to making any change to the property tax rate, be it an increase or decrease, the Council will insure a thorough dissemination of relevant information in understandable language (i.e. 10th grade reading level with applicable graphic presentations) using local print and electronic media, an information campaign equal to or exceeding

that explaining the recent change in the Roanoke City Logo, and through town hall type meetings held at various locations throughout the city.